

Katrina Response: Daily Message Points

September 3, 2005

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Sec. Bradberry & General Riley Assess the Progress of Breach

- DOTD Secretary Johnny Bradberry and Gen. Don Riley of the Corps of Engineers to assess conditions and progress at the 17th Street Canal breach.
- Boh Brothers, which is installing the sheet pilings, is expected to complete its work this evening. (sheet pilings 24 inches wide by 50 feet long)

The East Jefferson levee district has completed construction of an access road on the levee from Old Hammond Highway South. They are now placing sandbags.

Additionally, the Orleans levee district is working to seal off the London canal at Lake Ponchartrain (using debris)

Some Ferries Operational, Assisting With Evacuations

- Two ferries now in operation in Chalmette have started moving **2,500 people** from Chalmette in St. Bernard Parish to Algiers Point, where they will await buses to complete their evacuation.
- DOTD working with the Coast Guard and the Governor's Office to provide food & water to these locations
- Three additional ferries are en route to join the evacuation effort.
- ETA in 10 hours.

Ferry closures

- Due to rescue efforts, ferry service has been canceled until further notice in: New Roads/St. Francisville; Plaquemine; White Castle; and Reserve.
- One DOTD ferry, in Cameron will remain operational
- The only DOTD ferry that's unaffected is the one in Cameron.
- Three other crossings with tugs and barges are still operational: Melville, Duty, and Monkey Island.

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Search and Rescue Operations Continue

- Among missions conducted yesterday, LDWF participated in **completing** evacuation patients from
 - Tulane Medical Center
 - University Medical Center
 - Charity Hospital
 - Methodist Hospital
 - Chalmette Medical Center
 - Lakeview Medical Center
 - 400+ evacuees near Gravier Street
 - plus another 200+ individual civilians picked up around inner city New Orleans
- **WLF has rescued and approximately 7,000 people**
- Cooperative watercraft assistance is being provided by Texas Parks & Wildlife; Tennessee Wildlife Resources; Arkansas Game and Fish; Kentucky Dept. of Fish & Wildlife; Missouri Dept. of Conservation
- Cooperative aircraft/ helicopter assistance is being provided by the US Coast Guard and the LA Air National Guard

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Tool Free Number for DSS Assistance

- **1-888-LAHELPU** and provides information on several programs such as: Food Stamp Benefits, including Disaster Food Stamp Benefits; Medicaid and WIC; Developmental Disorders; Mental Health Counseling; Addictive Disorders; Social Security Benefits and Social Security Disability Benefits; Child Support; Foster Care Program; DHH Optional State Supplement Checks; Louisiana Rehabilitation Services; and Unemployment Benefits and Disaster Unemployment Benefits..

Assisting Families with Locating Missing Children

- To assist families and children who have been lost or separated from their families as a result of the disaster, DSS is partnering with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to set up a web site (www.missingkids.com.) and toll-free number: **(800) THE LOST.**

Food Stamp Applications Accepted, Food Stamps Made Available

- DSS offices statewide accepted **75,000 applications on FRIDAY**
- Offices remain open to accept and process application and issue food stamps **24 hours a day 7 days a week.**

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Orleans Parish Prison evacuation complete

- DOC **completed the evacuation process** of OPP approximately 8:00 p.m. last night
- As of 5:00 AM (Friday, September 2), approximately 2100 were awaiting transport at the Elayn Hunt Correctional Center, a staging area in St. Gabriel
- That number will significantly decrease as the day goes on.

Coordination of a temporary holding & processing facility underway

- DOC and AG's Office are coordinating a temporary facility for the holding & processing of looters & other people accused of committing crimes
- Located near the AMTRAK train station in New Orleans
- Construction of that temporary facility has begun and we are measuring completion in hours rather than days.
- DOC will provide approximately 20 employees for security & operations at that site once complete
- Approximately 20 Probation and Parole officers are providing security for the NOFD at the staging area where DOC evacuated OPP inmates.

Search, rescue and temporary shelter of OPP employees is being conducted by the Louisiana Sheriffs Association with support as needed from DOC.

Some officers and employees were evacuated to Hunt over the last three days as well, where they have been provided food, shelter and phone privileges.

Status of Washington Correctional Institute in Angie, Louisiana

- Still without electricity but operating on emergency power.
- There is no phone service in or out of the facility, however HQ is able to maintain contact with staff via a computer phone line.
- The facility is attempting to resume inmate visitation with family by tomorrow.
- Details on that to follow.

Support & Supplies being collected and coordinated for distribution

- The Kentucky Department of Corrections is sending personnel, equipment and supplies to Louisiana today.
- Other correctional systems have offered assistance as well
- DOC Headquarters will be collecting those supplies and sending them first, out to shelters in need, and secondly to state facilities who have assumed responsibility for the thousands of inmates from Jefferson and Orleans parishes.
- **The first donations to come into Headquarters were by inmates themselves (State Police Barracks). They donated two boxes of personal hygiene items.**

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Unemployment & Disaster Assistance Claim Forms Distributed to Shelters

- DOL & Local Workforce Investment Area partners visiting evacuation shelters to take **unemployment** and **disaster assistance** claims from displaced residents: Houma Civic Center, Lamar-Dixon Expo Center in Gonzales, the Baton Rouge River Center, the Cajun Dome in Lafayette; the Rayne Civic Center; Hirsh Coliseum (Saturday) and LSU in Shreveport; Paragon Casino in Marksville; and the Monroe Civic Center.

The Texas Workforce Commission is also assisting in disaster relief

- Several hundred TWC workers will be available at the Astrodome this weekend to help evacuees file for UI benefits.
- **TWC has begun installing 1,000 telephone lines in the Astrodome** so evacuees can apply for UI claims over the phone.

The Labor Department will continue to process Unemployment Claims and Disaster Assistant claims over the weekend and Labor Day.

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Commissioner of the Louisiana Office of Financial Institutions, John Ducrest, issued guidance to state chartered financial institutions regarding the closure of existing branches & the reopening of relocated branches or new branches of financial institutions

The guidance applies to all state chartered banks, savings and loans, credit unions, and savings banks and will remain in effect for a period of 30 days, unless extended by the Commissioner.

Some standard procedures for closing or opening branches are being waived or streamlined for financial institutions in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina, including: St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Washington, Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemine, St. Bernard, Assumption, LaFourche, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Mary, and Terrebonne. For more information visit the OFI website at www.ofi.state.la.us.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

DEQ & EPR fly over air-sampling shows no significant chemical findings

- DEQ and the Environmental Protection Agency flew through a plume of a fire on Charters St. in New Orleans.
- **The air- sampling results from the plane**, known as ASPCT, **showed no significant findings.**
- The chemicals found, ethylene, methane (Freon 22) methanol, were almost nondetectable. They were found directly in the plume.

Oil-like slick in Venice

- DEQ flyover in the Venice area late Thursday evening revealed an oil-like slick in the Mississippi River
- Slick is visible and leaking into the river from an area near two storage tanks
- The area is not accessible at this time; DEQ cannot verify the cause of the leak
- DEQ's aerial data management team estimates the tanks are approximately 280 feet wide and 20 feet tall, potentially holding approximately 80,000 barrels of petroleum; there has been no confirmation or verification of this information
- DEQ is providing the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinators Office, Coast Guard and Environmental Protection with information regarding the situation

Department of Revenue

Long-term hotel evacuees entitled to state sales tax exemption

- Hurricane Katrina victims and others, whose use of hotel rooms extends for periods longer than two continuous months, **are entitled to exemption from state sales tax** on their room occupancy charges.

- Revenue Ruling No. 03-007, providing details on this subject, can be viewed from the department's web site at <http://www.revenue.louisiana.gov/forms/lawspolicies/RR03007.pdf>.
- Any questions should be forwarded to webmaster@rev.state.la.us <<mailto:webmaster@rev.state.la.us>>.

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LED & LABI Surveying Louisiana's Business Needs

- LED is working with the state's largest business lobbying group Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (LABI) to survey their members from the affected areas to determine business needs, as well as those members in unaffected areas regarding how they can help other businesses get reestablished.
- LED and LABI will use this survey as a tool to help temporarily relocate businesses in Louisiana areas.

Outreach to the entertainment industry begins to reap benefits

- Louisiana Institute of Film Technology (LIFT) is the first production company to relocate and resume production since the hurricane. The New Orleans-based LIFT has opened an expansion office in Shreveport, with plans for one in Monroe, and has reiterated its intention to reopen in New Orleans as soon as possible.

LED Opens its Doors to GNO, Inc. & Small Business Administration

- LED opened its Baton Rouge office to staffs of GNO, Inc., the office of Mayor Ray Nagin and the Small Business Administration who will all maintain temporary offices until they can return to their permanent locations in New Orleans.
- Additionally, the Greater New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau relocated its personnel on the same floor as LED's executive offices in the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

OFFICE OF THE LT. GOVERNOR

Lt. Gov. Landrieu, Coach Blanco to Visit Texas Shelters Today

- At Governor Blanco's request Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu and First Gentleman Raymond Blanco are visiting Louisiana evacuees at the Houston Astrodome, Dallas' Reunion Arena and Lafayette's Cajun Dome

The Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism continues to offer assistance to evacuees

- DCR& T working to find lodging in Louisiana and out of state
- extending hours at the welcome centers offering refreshments and information
- serving as an evacuee stop for thousands at our welcome centers
- providing food, water, diapers and other essentials

Atchafalaya and Alexandria welcome centers open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

- Food, water and port a let's for evacuees are available at these center
- Local volunteers are cooking, donating necessities, and assisting state in comforting evacuees

Louisiana public libraries are providing evacuees with Internet access, temporary library cards, discarded books, extended hours and story-times at the shelters

- Many are opening for the Labor Day weekend to accommodate those needing Internet access
- All of our public libraries have reported serving evacuees
- For example, the Pointe Coupee Library served 975 evacuees in one day

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION

- Four auditors from the State Inspector Generals office have gone over to the workforce commission to help them with answering phones and answering questions from persons who are calling to make donations
- OSP has been helping DOTD look for 10 semi trailer stainless steel refrigerated trucks to store human remains/corpses
- DOA offices have obtained in Federal Surplus Property a 400 KW generator which will be sent Tangipahoa parish to run a water system
- **10,000 blankets will be delivered tomorrow**
- **3 additional generators (60, 125 and a 10 KW) will be delivered today**

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Picard Meets With Affected School Leaders

- State Superintendent of Education Cecil J. Picard met with school leaders from the districts most affected by Hurricane Katrina to inform them of the state's short-term plans for educating children.
- Superintendents or representatives from 11 south Louisiana school districts were in attendance as well as members of their support staff.
- Those districts include: Orleans, Jefferson, St. Charles, St. Tammany, St. Bernard, City of Bogalusa, East Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Tangipahoa, St. Helena and Plaquemines.

Displaced Teacher & School Support Staff Hired

- Lafayette Parish officials report that they have registered approximately 2,000-2,500 students and hired more than 100 teachers
- East Baton Rouge Parish says they have enrolled approximately 1,000 students and hired 135 teachers
- State officials hope to begin accumulating enrollment and hiring estimates within the next two weeks.

Toll-free number about Texas schools for established for Louisiana parents

- For info about Texas schools call 1-800-957-5109

LDE Continues Supporting Teacher, Parents & Students

- LDE currently providing temporary office space for Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parish school officials and has offered space to any other impacted district needing assistance
- LDE staff has assisted more than 3,000 individuals with school information over the last two days
- The toll free number will remain operational through the weekend and on Labor Day from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. The toll-free helpline is 1-877-453-2721

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOLS

1. HOW LONG WILL CHILDREN BE OUT OF SCHOOL AND WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR STUDENTS?

It is impossible to know how long schools will be closed in parts of Louisiana. The Department of Education is encouraging displaced students to enroll in school in the community where they are seeking temporary shelter. You should contact the local school district office concerning placement of your child. A complete list of local school district contact information can be found on our website by clicking on “School Directory.”

East Baton Rouge Parish is asking that evacuee parents contact them at 225-226-3762, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

If you are seeking temporary shelter out of state you should contact the local county school system and inform them that your child has been displaced by Hurricane Katrina. We are sending information throughout the country concerning availability of student records and information.

2. WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL UNIFORMS?

We have asked all local school districts in Louisiana to provide flexibility for evacuee students in the area of uniforms. It is important for students enrolled quickly with as little disruption as possible.

3. WHAT SHOULD TEACHERS/SUPPORT WORKERS IN THE IMPACTED AREAS DO ABOUT EMPLOYEMENT?

Teachers/Support Workers who have been displaced by Hurricane Katrina are being encouraged to apply for jobs in the areas where they are seeking temporary shelter. Many of these districts are enrolling evacuee students will need additional teachers and support staff. Teachers can also file for unemployment through the Louisiana by visiting local unemployment agencies or filing on line with the Department of Labor, www.laworks.net.

4. WHAT ABOUT TEACHER/SUPPORT WORKER PAY?

If you are employed in Orleans Parish, you can call 1-877-771-5800 for more information. Orleans Parish school employees will continue to receive health care benefits, including individuals who recently received layoff notices.

Other impacted school districts are attempting to reestablish their business operations in Baton Rouge. Future updates will be given in the future.

5. WHERE CAN OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS/TEACHERS BE MADE?

Those wanting to offer help, assistance, school supplies or monetary donations for the children of Louisiana should email the Department of Education at customerservice@la.gov.

6. ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

Red Cross 1-800-GET-INFO (1-800-438-4636)
 1-800-HELP-NOW (1-800-435-7669)

FEMA 1-800-621-FEMA

Louisiana Dept. of Education 1-877-453-2721

Texas School Information 1-800-957-5109